

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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EO 11652 NA
TAGS: CASC (DAVIS, JOHN W. JR.), BR
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON DAVIS CASE

REF: JOHNSON-ZIMMERMAN TELCON, JUNE 20, 1978

1. MISS EMMA BROWN DAVIS AND HER MOTHER MRS. EMMA DAVIS VISITED EMBASSY JUNE 20 IN ORDER TO REPORT LATEST THREATS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST THEMSELVES AND PROPERTY, TO PRESS FOR REPLY TO THEIR LETTER OF MARCH 27, '78, TO PRES. CARTER, AND TO ELICIT EMBASSY ASSISTANCE IN PRESENTING NEW PROPOSAL TO INCRA (NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR COLONIZATION AND AGRARIAN REFORM) FOR DISPOSITION OF THEIR PROPERTIES.

2. SPEAKING WITH DCM, DAVISES REPORTED THAT ON JUNE 15 GROUP OF 15 ARMED MEN INVADDED PROPERTY, AVOIDING TWO POLICEMEN STATIONED THERE, AND THREATENED TO KILL SEVERAL BRAZILIAN WORKERS AT FAMILY SAWMILL. WORKERS, THUS INTIMIDATED, REFUSED TO COME TO WORK FOR SEVERAL DAYS. ONE DAY EARLIER, FAMILY DISCOVERED SQUATTER SHACK ON PROPERTY; POLICE WERE ALERTED AND TORE IT DOWN. THIS WAS FIFTH INCIDENT OF THIS TYPE IN RECENT MONTHS. AS A RESULT OF THESE INCURSIONS, DAVISES HAVE ASKED FOR REINFORCEMENTS FROM PARA STATE POLICE, WHO HAVE THUS FAR NOT REPLIED TO REQUEST.

3. DAVISES BELIEVE THAT VIOLENCE AND HARRASSMENT HAVE BEEN PROMPTED BY LARGE LAND INTERESTS IN REGION AS WELL AS BY SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS,
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THE LATTER SUPPORTED BY LOCAL CLERGY. DAVISES HAVE ENLISTED POLITICAL SUPPORT OF GENERAL EUCLYDES FIGUEIREDO, FORMER COMMANDANT OF 8TH MILITARY REGION AND BROTHER OF PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE JOAO BAPTISTA FIGUEIREDO. DAVISES ALSO REPEATEDLY ASKED DCM WHY THERE HAD BEEN NO RESPONSE TO THEIR LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER, WHICH HE HAD RECEIVED DURING HIS BRAZIL VISIT IN MARCH.

4. DCM ASSURED DAVISES THAT EMBASSY WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT FAMILY'S EFFORTS TO OBTAIN ADEQUATE PROTECTION FOR THEMSELVES AND PROPERTY AS WELL AS TO RESOLVE LAND PROBLEMS, AND PROMISED EMB WOULD FOLLOW UP THEIR INCRA APPROACH.

5. FOLLOWING EMBASSY MEETING, DAVISES MET JUNE 20 WITH COLONEL FLAVIO MOTINHO OF GOB SECURITY COUNCIL STAFF, WHO SUGGESTED THAT DAVISES SHOULD PERSONALLY PRESENT THEIR PROPOSAL TO INCRA. MOTINHO ARRANGED MEETING BETWEEN DAVISES AND INCRA PRESIDENT DR. LOURENCO DA SILVA. DAVISES PHONED EMBASSY JUNE 23 TO REPORT ON INCRA MEETING. DA SILVA REPORTEDLY TOLD THEM THAT PROPOSAL WAS REASONABLE AND THAT HE WOULD SEND SURVEY TEAM TO DAVIS PROPERTY WITHIN ONE WEEK. DAVISES SPECIFIED PARCEL OF LAND WHICH THEY SAID THEY WOULD LIKE TO RETAIN. DAVISES REPORTED THAT DA SILVA WAS OTHERWISE NONCOMMITTAL.

6. EMBASSY HAS REQUESTED THAT DAVISES INFORM US WHEN SURVEY TEAM BEGINS WORK ON PROPERTY, AND KEEP BELEM CONSUL FULLY INFORMED ON ALL EVENTS. EMBASSY INTENDS TO INTERVENE WITH INCRA SHOULD PROGRESS ON SURVEY NOT BE FORTHCOMING. AMBASSADOR SAYRE RAISED CASE WITH JUSTICE MINISTER FALCAO DURING INITIAL CALL JUNE 20. FALCAO DISPLAYED BOTH FAMILIARITY WITH CASE AND INTEREST IN PREVENTING FURTHER BLOODSHED.

7. MEMCOM ON LATEST DAVIS MEETINGS IS BEING POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT.

8. COMMENT: DAVIS FAMILY HAS CONCLUDED, PROBABLY CORRECTLY, THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VOLATILE SITUATION IN THEIR AREA INVOLVING SQUATTERS, LARGE LAND INTERESTS, CLERGY, AND LOCAL OFFICIALS, PRECLUDES LARGE-SCALE ARMY OR MILITARY POLICE INTERVENTION TO PROTECT LAND-HOLDERS' LIVES AND PROPERTY, ESPECIALLY THOSE OF FOREIGNERS. THEY THEREFORE SEE INCRA AND POLITICAL PRESSURE IN BRASILIA AS THEIR LAST CHANCE TO DIVEST THEMSELVES OF PROPERTY WITH SOME KIND OF COMPENSATION.

9. ACTION REQUESTED-PLEASE ADVISE STATUS OF RESPONSE TO DAVIS' MARCH 27 LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER, AND EXPEDITE.
SAYRE

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